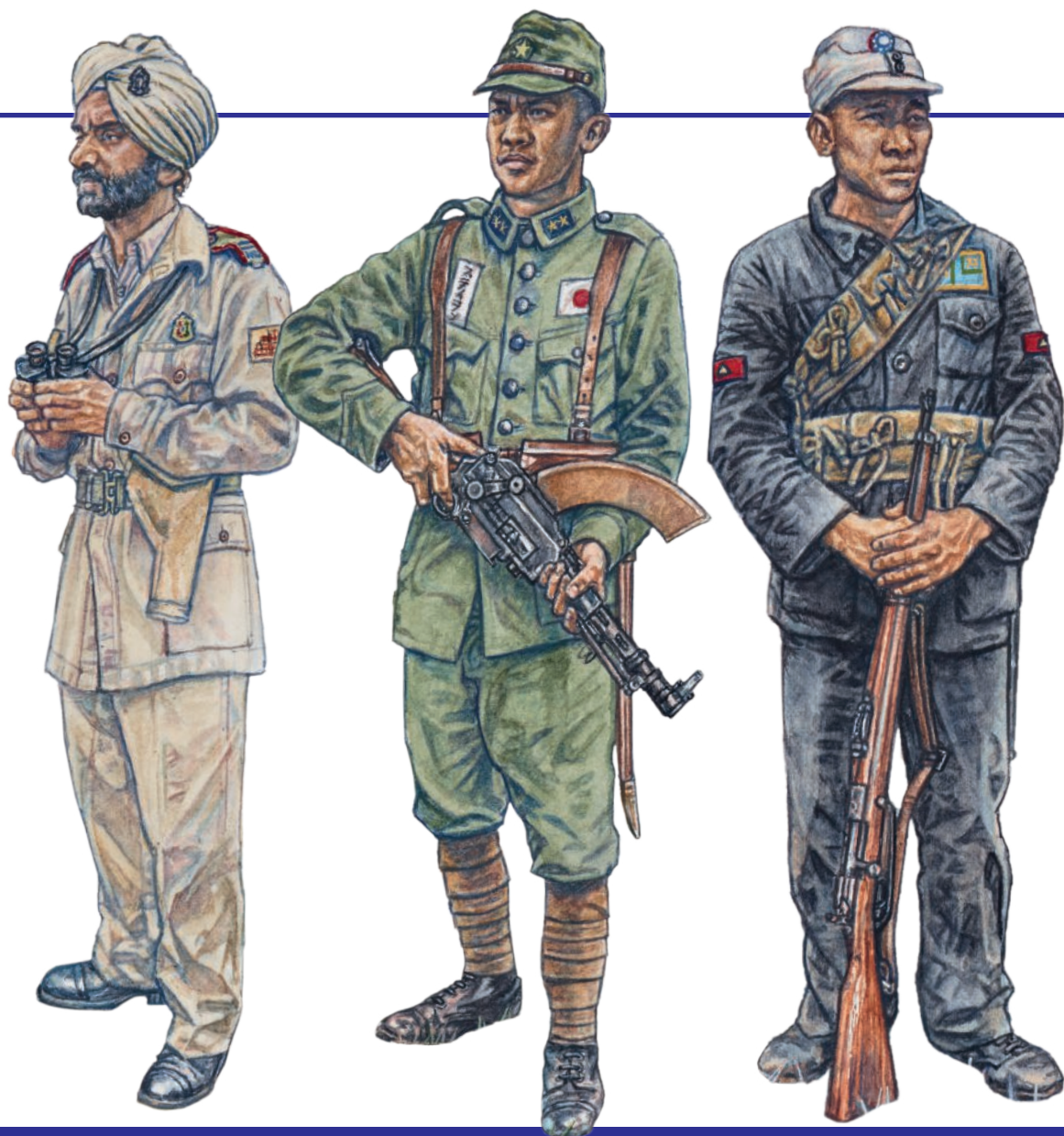


Japan's Asian Allies 1941–45



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Japan's Asian Allies 1941–45



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JAPAN'S ASIAN ALLIES 1941–45

INTRODUCTION

Thai infantryman carrying out bayonet practice during his training in 1941, dressed in the standard greenish light cotton uniform with M1915 Adrian steel helmet (see Plate E1). The tapered “semi-breeches” were sometimes worn with puttees and sometimes without. This soldier appears to be armed with a Japanese Arisaka 6.5mm Type 38 (M1905) rifle, which would largely replace the 8mm Thai Type 46 (M1903) Mauser that had been produced in Japan under a Thai government license from the German manufacturer. (Author's collection)



Simultaneously with the attack by the Imperial Japanese Navy on the US Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on December 7, 1941, the Japanese armed forces launched the first of a series of offensives in East Asia and the Pacific against the colonial possessions of Great Britain and her dominions, of the Netherlands, and of the United States. Japan's primary war aim was to secure the material resources of these territories, particularly the oilfields of the Netherlands East Indies and Southeast Asian rubber plantations and tin mines.

When the war began, the Japanese Empire already included Korea, large areas of northern and eastern China, and, in all but name, Manchukuo – a client state created by the Japanese after their conquest of China's Manchurian provinces in 1931–32. By the end of their lightning offensives, in mid-1942, most of Southeast Asia and the West and South Pacific were in Japanese hands. They had succeeded in driving British forces from Northern Borneo, Malaya, and Burma (today's Myanmar); the Dutch from Southern Borneo and the Netherlands East Indies (today's Indonesia); and the United States from the Philippines, while the main island groups of the South Pacific were also under Japanese occupation. Japan also dominated the French colonies in Indochina (Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos), since France was partly occupied, and unoccupied Vichy France was a client state of Japan's ally, Nazi Germany. Thailand (Siam), while still a sovereign nation, had also passed under Japan's influence as a somewhat reluctant ally.

However, the unexpected scope of this success would present Japan's overstretched forces with major problems in garrisoning and supplying these far-flung frontiers and island possessions. At the same time, they still had huge commitments in China, where the stalemate of 1941 was to be broken by US aid to Gen Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist regime (the Kuomintang), together with increasing activity by Communist guerrillas. These strategic challenges would immediately increase after June 4, 1942, when Adms Spruance's and Fletcher's US naval victory over Adm Nagumo's force off Midway virtually destroyed the Imperial Navy's aircraft-carrier force, and with it a great part of its offensive capability.

Japan proclaimed that it had liberated the peoples of Asia from their Western colonial masters, and that the newly conquered territories were now parts of its “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere”. However, it did not take long for those who had seen the Japanese as liberators in 1941–42 to

Troops of the Manchukuo 3rd Infantry Regiment parade in the early 1940s, wearing M1930 khaki-brown winter uniform and armed with Arisaka Type 38 rifles (compare with Plate A1). The field cap may at first sight resemble the Japanese pattern, but has a distinctly flatter crown; its national badge is a wreathed five-color enamel star. The collar patches are red, the infantry branch-of-service color, and display unit numbers. Other colors were: cavalry, light green; artillery, yellow; engineers, brown; service corps, dark blue; supply troops, silver-gray; medical corps, dark green; and the Air Force, light blue. (Author's collection)

Manchukuo soldiers on parade wearing the winter fur hat. Although most have Type 38 rifles and Japanese leather belt equipment, the first and fourth men from the left have one of several variations of Japanese training-model light machine guns. Not intended for combat, these were sometimes pressed into service due to shortages; they were lightly constructed, and may have taken reduced-charge 6.5mm ammunition. (Author's collection)



recognize the harsh reality: that the peoples of the Asian and Pacific territories had simply exchanged one colonial master for another. Some nationalists in the occupied countries nevertheless persisted in regarding this occupation by fellow Asians, however exploitative and merciless, as a step towards their long-desired goal of independence. Some leaders, like Aung San in Burma and the exiled Indian politician Subhas Chandra Bose, were prepared to fight alongside Imperial Japan in the hope of achieving that eventual result. So began one of the least-known aspects of World War II: the raising and deployment of foreign “volunteers” to defend their territories under Japanese rule.

MANCHUKUO, 1933–1945

The Japanese takeover of the three Chinese provinces of Manchuria in 1931–32 led to the establishment of a client state named Manchukuo. Japan invited the former last Emperor of China, Pu Yi, to become chief executive and then emperor of the puppet Empire of Manchukuo in 1934.

Manchukuo Army

Initially the Army was made up of ex-soldiers of the Manchurian warlord, Chang Hsueh-liang. Manchukuo troops took part in several Japanese campaigns in China in the 1930s, beginning with the occupation of Jehol province in 1933. The Army was modernized and developed during the 1930s, and by 1934 it had reached a strength of 80,000 men; a small Navy and Air Force had also been established. A large Manchukuo contingent fought alongside the Japanese Sixth Army against the Soviet Red Army on the Manchukuo–Mongolia border in 1938–39 (the Khasan and Khalkin Gol campaigns).

In 1941, the Manchukuo Army stood at approximately 200,000 men. The higher formations were the 1st Infantry Division, 1st Guards Brigade, and 1st Cavalry Division. The majority of the



Army was organized in brigades: 10 infantry, 6 cavalry, and 21 “mixed,” the latter each comprising an infantry regiment, a cavalry regiment and an artillery battery. There were also 2 independent infantry and 7 independent cavalry brigades, 11 artillery units of various strengths, and 5 anti-aircraft regiments.

By the early 1940s, the Army had been issued with Japanese rifles and machine guns. The Japanese were unwilling to waste too much precious artillery or many tanks on these patchily reliable allies, but Manchukuo did have some guns up to 75mm caliber and a few Type 34 light tanks, plus some homemade armored cars. Cavalry were recruited from the Mongolian population, and gained a good reputation. Also included in the Army was the Asano Bde, recruited from the White Russian émigré community which had sought refuge in Manchuria in the early 1920s.

Apart from fighting Communist guerrillas in northern and eastern Manchuria, the large Manchukuo Army was relatively underused during 1941–45. As Japan’s manpower shortage became acute it “requested” the service of Manchukuo troops; some served in China alongside Japanese units, and others were seen on Sumatra in Indonesia, and in Burma. The Manchukuo Army was destroyed during the August 1945 Soviet offensive. Any soldiers that were able to surrender were incorporated en-masse into the Communist forces during the 1946–49 Chinese Civil War.

Manchukuo Air Force & Navy

In 1940 the Manchukuo Air Force was provided with Japanese Nakajima Ki-27 (“Nate”) and later Ki-43 (“Oscar”) fighters, to join their Junkers Ju 86 bomber-transporters and Ki-19 trainers. By the end of the war some fighters had been confiscated by the Japanese, but Ki-43s were reportedly committed against US B-29 Superfortress bombers in 1944–45.



The Manchukuo cavalry were a genuinely elite force, raised amongst the Mongolian population of the Manchurian provinces. These troopers are armed with the Japanese Type 44 (M1911) cavalry carbine. Note the light-green transverse tabs at the shoulder seams, bearing yellow rank stars, in the style of the Japanese Type 5 (M1930) pattern. (Author’s collection)

Manchukuo soldiers armed with the 6.5mm Japanese Type 11 (M1922) light machine gun. This photo was taken in the closing stage of the war, immediately before the Japanese Kwantung Army and their Manchukuo allies were overwhelmed by the massive Soviet offensive launched in August 1945. (Author's collection)



Manchukuo's Navy had a mixture of light warships that had belonged to Chang Hsueh-liang's forces and new vessels supplied by Japan in the mid-1930s, totaling 16 gunboats and 8 other river craft plus a single destroyer. These took part in a river campaign against the Soviet Navy along the Manchukuo–Mongolia border in 1938–39. Along with the Army and Air Force, the Navy was destroyed in 1945, some of its more modern ships being taken into Soviet use thereafter.

“NANKING CHINA,” 1940–1945

When Japan invaded China in 1937, the Nationalist armies of Chiang Kai-shek began a long defensive war, but he was obliged to move his capital several times, eventually settling at Chungking (Chongqing) in central western China. Japan soon established a number of puppet governments in northern and eastern cities, with the intention that these

Wang Ching-wei (far left), the leader of the Nanking puppet government, inspects his troops in the early years of his rule; he habitually wore an officer's uniform (see Plate B1), although he had never served in any Chinese army before coming to power in 1940. The soldiers are well turned out and have been issued with Japanese small arms. Their flags (compare with Plate B2) are based on those used by the Chinese Nationalist Army, with the addition of a yellow pennant at the top. (Author's collection)





Nanking Army soldiers performing the Japanese “Banzai” celebration outside their barracks. The best Nanking troops tended to be stationed in the provinces nearest their capital in central China; these men have complete Nationalist-type uniforms and equipment, with the German M1935 helmet issued to that army in the mid-1930s. The white breast patch bears unit identification in black characters. (Author’s collection)

would rule occupied China as quasi-independent regimes overseen by the Imperial Japanese Army. A “Provisional Government” was established at Peking (Beijing) in northern China in December 1937, and a “Reformed Government” in the fallen Nationalist capital of Nanking (Nanjing) in eastern central China in March 1938. To the east of Nanking, the port city of Shanghai had its own “Great Way” government, with a 6,000-strong armed police force.

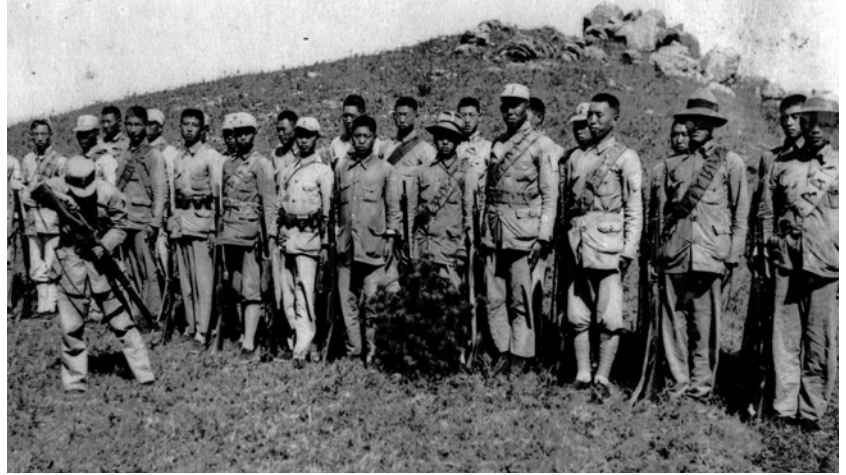
In 1939 the Japanese persuaded a prominent Nationalist politician, Wang Ching-wei, to join them, and put him at the head of a new “Reorganized Government” set up in Nanking in 1940. Although this regime claimed to be the national government for the whole country, the north remained largely independent throughout the war. Wang Ching-wei presented himself as the true disciple of the first Chinese republican revolutionary leader, Sun Yat-sen, and his army used much the same flags and insignia as the Nationalists.

“Nanking” Army

Wang Ching-wei began to gather together the military forces of the various local regimes into the so-called Nanking Army, its diverse components commanded by generals who had resisted Chiang Kai-shek’s rule. Some of the Nanking Army’s units were well disciplined and trained, especially those stationed in central China around the capital. These troops were comparable to the best Nationalist troops, and were provided with Japanese Type 94 light tanks and artillery. Others were little more than an armed rabble, like the worst of Chiang Kai-shek’s forces. Most units were armed with Chinese rifles and machine guns plus the odd mortar and artillery piece.

On paper, the regular Nanking Army had a strength of about 300,000 men by 1944, but of those only some 50,000 were under the direct control of Wang Ching-wei in Nanking. The rest were led by autonomous local commanders, harking back to the “Warlord Era” of the 1920s. In

Provincial Nanking Army troops holding a rural post against guerrillas in the early 1940s. They wear a mixture of uniforms and headgear, and many appear to be Nationalist deserters wearing field caps and light khaki cotton uniforms. Such troops were seen by the Communists as a good source of arms and ammunition, which some were even willing to hand over without a fight. (Author's collection)



Inner Mongolian cavalry trumpeters mounted on hardy steppe ponies sound a call during a parade in the early 1940s; much of the Inner Mongolian Army was made up of cavalry, which had a high reputation. They are wearing Japanese cotton summer uniforms, though with light local shoes. (Author's collection)



northern China there were about 93,000 of these semi-detached troops, in eastern China 160,000 more, and in the south some 47,000. In addition to all these there were a similar number of irregulars and local militias, with a recorded total of another 299,800 men. Many of these were effectively bandits, of little value to the Japanese.

During the war of 1940–45 against both Communist and Nationalist guerrillas, the regular Nanking Army played a supporting role alongside the IJA. Some Nanking units did launch their own anti-guerrilla campaigns, but these were discontinued after they led to mass desertions. By the time Wang Ching-wei died of cancer in 1944, the Nanking government had essentially collapsed. When the war ended, both the Nationalists and the Communists allowed thousands of ex-Nanking troops to join their forces, although a number of higher-ranking officers were executed as traitors.

“Nanking” Air Force & Navy

A small Air Force was established in May 1941, with 8 transport planes and 4 basic trainers. The only combat aircraft it ever acquired were 2 Nationalist Air Force Tupolev SB-2 bombers, which were flown into Nanking territory by their deserting crews. Japan promised Wang Ching-wei some Ki-27 fighters to make up a token combat element, but these never materialized.

The Nanking Navy raised in December 1940 was equipped with ex-Nationalist ships, including 2 cruisers which had been re-floated after being sunk by the Japanese. A number of Japanese torpedo boats were also added to the fleet, but it saw little or no action before the end of the war.

INNER MONGOLIA, 1937–1945

Inner Mongolia was a province of China situated to the south and east of the Soviet-dominated Mongolian People's Republic established in 1924. Loosely ruled by



Inner Mongolian infantrymen in the late 1930s wearing what amount to Japanese winter uniforms with Chinese equipment (see also Plate A2). The Mongolians had fought as proxies of the Japanese since 1936 and as allies in the early days of the Sino-Japanese War the following year. Japanese winter fur hats are worn; the Imperial Japanese Army's yellow five-point star badge was often worn in place of the official Inner Mongolian badge of a blue star with a yellow central disc. (Author's collection)

the Chinese Republic, its sparse pastoral population of self-governing tribes had been campaigning for independence from Nationalist China since the early 1930s. From the mid-1930s the separatist forces had been supported by the Japanese in a series of proxy campaigns against local Chinese authorities; in 1936–37 Prince Teh Wang became de facto leader of the province, and allied it with Japan and Manchukuo. The Japanese used his army against the Nationalist Chinese in Suiyuan province, and when they invaded China in 1937, Inner Mongolian cavalry supported their northern operations.

The Inner Mongolian Army was commanded by Li Shou-hsin, a former Manchukuo Army officer, and Wang Ying, an ex-bandit. Contradictory intelligence reports on the size of the army during 1941–45 vary dramatically. One states that it had about 10,000 men in all, divided between a regular force of 4,400 troops in five so-called cavalry “divisions” numbered 4th–8th, and some 6,000 militiamen from the Pin and Po tribes. A US intelligence report states that Teh Wang’s government controlled 4,000–5,000 troops, and that limited numbers of field guns and light tanks may have been supplied by the Japanese. Other estimates of as many as 45,000 men under arms in Inner Mongolia are almost certainly exaggerated. By the early 1940s, the prince had lost any faith in the Japanese, but he maintained his government until 1945.

THAILAND, 1941–1945

Although the Southeast Asian kingdom of Thailand (Siam) had never been colonised by European powers, it had lost parts of its territory to neighboring British and French colonies in the late 19th century. The country had been relatively stable in the early 20th century, but in 1933 a military coup led to the country’s absolute ruler King Prachatiok having

A Thai infantry squad, armed with 8mm Type 46 (M1903) Mauser rifles and an 8mm Type 66 (M1924) Madsen light machine gun, seen in a jungle trench during the brief 1940–41 campaign against the Vichy French in Cambodia. See Plate E1 for uniform details. (Author's collection)



to accept a constitutional monarchy. He left the country and abdicated in 1935, to be formally succeeded by his 9-year-old half-nephew Ananda Mahidol, but the boy remained at his private school in Switzerland.

From 1938, Thailand fell under the political control of Gen Phibun Songkhram, a pro-Japanese artillery officer who had gained influence after playing a major role in putting down the Bovaradet Rebellion in 1933. Thailand's relationship with Japan was uneasy, however, and in December 1941 the Imperial Army crossed Thai territory to invade Malaya and Burma. Resistance to this violation of the kingdom's borders was short-lived, as the Thai government recognized the advantages of cooperation. The Japanese coerced Thailand into signing an alliance on December 8, 1941. On January 25, 1942, Phibun's regime duly declared war on the British Empire and the USA.

Thai Army

In November 1940, the Thai Army was expanded from 44 to 75 battalions, and in 1941 it was divided under 6 regional commands. The 1st Bangkok Command had 7 infantry battalions, 1 cavalry and artillery battalion, and a tank unit. Each of the other commands (Southeast, Northeast, Northwest, Southwest and Peninsula) was based on 4 infantry battalions with at least 1 artillery battalion. Southeast, Northeast, and Peninsula Commands each had double the usual amount of artillery, while Northeast Command also had 2 cavalry units.

During the 1941 campaign against the Vichy French in Cambodia, (see below, "Operations 1941–1943") Thailand committed about 30,000 troops, but a limited demobilization took place following this conflict. Beginning on April 30, 1941, the Army was reduced to 40,000 men in 71 battalions, and former divisions were redesignated as regiments. Equipment was a mix of older British, Swedish, and Danish types bought during the 1930s, and newer Japanese weapons supplied after 1941. The Thai Army used mostly Swedish artillery including Bofors 75mm, 100mm, and 150mm field guns, and a twin-barrel light infantry gun. Anti-

aircraft guns were a mix of Bofors 80mm and Vickers 40mm, plus 26 chassis from Vickers 6-ton tanks mounting 2-pounder automatic “pom-poms.” Thailand’s armored force included 18 Vickers 6-ton light tanks, 8 Carden-Lloyd M1931 amphibious light tanks, 30 Carden-Lloyd M1929 tankettes, and 8 Vickers-Morris M1931 armored cars. After 1941 the Thais received at least 38 Japanese Type 95 “*Ha-Go*” light tanks, but this number declined during the war due to poor maintenance.

Thai Air Force & Navy

The Air Force had been established as early as 1914 with 8 French machines, and by the late 1930s it was a strong force with 290 aircraft, mainly purchased from the USA. These included Curtiss Hawk II (F11C Goshawk) biplane and Hawk 75 (P-36) monoplane fighters, and 6 Martin 139W (B-10) monoplane bombers. Once under the influence of Japan, the Air Force bought 93 Japanese aircraft, including Ki-36 trainers, Ki-27 and Ki 43 fighters, Ki-30 (“Ann”) light bombers, and Ki-21 (“Sally”) medium bombers; the Japanese also passed on 8 more Martin 139Ws captured from the Dutch.

In 1940, Thailand also had a relatively strong navy; this was employed largely for coastal protection, but it did take part in a brief but costly naval campaign against the Vichy French in January 1941. The Navy had 2 cruisers, *Naresuan* and *Taksin*; 3 coastal defense ships, *Donburi*, *Sukhodaya* and *Ratanakosindra*; and a destroyer, *Phra Ruang*. There were also the Mitsubishi-built submarines *Machanu*, *Vilun*, *Biajunbol*, and *Sinsamudor*, and 7 Italian-built torpedo boats.

Operations 1941–1943

On January 6, 1941 the Thais launched a ground offensive against largely undefended western Cambodia. On January 13, the French counterattacked (with 5 infantry and 2 artillery battalions), and the ground war soon settled into a stalemate. During a sea battle off Koh-Chang on January 17, a cobbled-together French squadron defeated the Thai Navy and sank or disabled half a dozen ships for no loss. Not wanting this defeat to lead to the overthrow of their protégé Phibun,



The Thai prime minister and virtual dictator, FM Phibun Songkhram (left – and see Plate E3) inspects his soldiers after their border war with the Vichy French. Phibun wears the officer's peaked cap while his men and the accompanying officers wear the alternative sidecap. Initial border penetrations, attacks on villages, and ambushes were soon checked by the French reaction, but the Japanese applied pressure on the Vichy authorities to cede territory and make other concessions. (Author's collection)



Thai Army crews in Japanese Type 95 light tanks parade through Bangkok following the 1941 “victory,” with the commanders proudly folding their arms in salute. The prewar Thai Army had more than 60 light tanks, tankettes and armored cars, and after their alliance with Japan the Thais purchased 38 of these 7.7-ton “Ha-Go” tanks in return for rice and gum fiber. (Author’s collection)

the Japanese then applied pressure on the Vichy French to conclude a one-sided peace treaty.

Throughout World War II the Japanese kept the Thai government on side by offering them the territories they had lost to Malaya and Burma in the late 19th century. On May 10, 1942, the Thai “Phayap” Northwest Army entered Burma’s southeastern Shan State. The invading army was made up of 3 infantry and 1 cavalry divisions, complete with Type 95 light tanks and supported by the Air Force. The Nationalist Chinese Army’s 93rd Division, which had held the border

area, were thrown back into China. Offensives continued throughout the summer, and by November 1942 the whole of the Shan State was in Thai hands. A further “liberation” of former Thai territory took place in August 1943, when the Japanese authorities in Malaya ceded the northern states of Kelantan, Trengganu, and Kedah to Thailand.

As the war turned against Japan, anti-Japanese feeling in Thailand increased, and in July 1944 Phibun’s government was overthrown and replaced by a less pliant regime. Until August 1945 the Thais and Japanese had an uneasy relationship, but the threat of a takeover of the country by the overstretched IJA never materialized.

INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY, 1942–1945

Background

During the 1930s, nationalist political groups, particularly the Indian National Congress party inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, agitated strongly for Indian independence from the British Empire. During World War II some nationalists were prepared to ally themselves with the Axis powers to further this cause by military means, but soon discovered that such support as they received from Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan was entirely self-serving. Japan had no intention of allowing their movement any true autonomy, and exploited them purely for its own ends.

During the Malayan campaign of December 1941–February 1942, a small staff called the Fujiwara *Kikan* was created under Maj Fujiwara, a senior IJA intelligence officer; its mission was to exploit pro-independence sentiment among expatriate Indians, and particularly among the tens of thousands of Indian Army troops fighting for the British. With the help of a local Indian activist, Pritam Singh, Maj Fujiwara convinced a captured officer of the 1/14th Punjab Regt, Capt Mohan Singh, to change sides. Mohan Singh began to recruit among his fellow Indian POWs for a “Free India Army,” assured by Fujiwara that it would be treated as an allied force and supported in its fight for Indian independence.

The fall of Singapore on February 15, 1942 gave Mohan Singh access to some 45,000 more potential recruits among the 80,000 Allied troops captured, and these Indian prisoners were separated from their British and Australian comrades and held in camps where they were treated



Indian National Army volunteers hold up an “On to Delhi!” banner proclaiming their desire to liberate their homeland from British rule. They wear British khaki-drill uniforms with a mixture of Sikh turbans and field service caps (sidecaps) for men of other communities; compare with Plate D. (Author’s collection)

comparatively better than the other prisoners. The political arm of the movement would be the Indian Independence League, established in June 1942 by a Japanese-resident Indian nationalist named Rash Behari Bose. Very large numbers of POWs proved receptive to appeals by Mohan Singh, and by the time of the official proclamation of the Indian National Army under his command on September 1, 1942 it claimed a strength of some 40,000. The INA were given new insignia for their British uniforms, and were re-issued with rifles, machine guns, and other weapons from captured British stocks. Many volunteers joined out of genuine enthusiasm for the cause of independence; others later claimed that they had hoped for a chance to re-cross the lines to the British if they were sent to the front.

It did not take long for Mohan Singh to begin to lose faith in the motives of the Japanese, and he began to voice his concerns that the INA was being treated as entirely subordinate to Japanese interests rather than being acknowledged as an independent liberation army. He was arrested by the Kenpeitai military police on December 29, 1942; after his imprisonment the leaderless INA was disbanded, and a proportion of the volunteers were returned to prison camps.

On the advice of Rash Behari Bose, Maj Fujiwara then contacted another and much more renowned nationalist named Subhas Chandra Bose (no relation), who had fled to exile in Germany in 1941. The controversial leader of a radical faction within the Indian National Congress, Chandra Bose was a political opponent of the pacifist Gandhi, and hoped to gain independence by military force. From Germany in 1941–42, Bose had helped recruit some 2,000 Indian POWs in North Africa for a regiment-sized *Legion Freies*

British equipment captured by the Japanese in Malaya and handed over to the INA included medium, anti-tank and anti-aircraft artillery. Also among the booty were 13 Universal (“Bren gun”) carriers and 14 Marmon-Herrington armored cars. Many of these were in poor condition, but the better carriers were given to the INA; this example, displaying a new number “9,” is described in the original caption as a “tank.” These light tracked armored vehicles were not shipped to Burma during the INA’s partial deployment to take part in the Japanese 1944 offensive. (Author’s collection)



This propaganda photo of Sikhs manning a Vickers MMG, with a tricolor flag in the background, idealizes the INA 1st Div's role in the Japanese offensive against Imphal and Kohima in March–June 1944, although the campaign did cost them many hundreds of lives. Like the Japanese troops committed to Gen Mutaguchi's "U-Go" offensive, after its failure the INA were left to fend for themselves, and many died of starvation and disease during their long retreat across Burma to Malaya. The infantry ("guerrilla") battalions had five companies, one with 6 Vickers MMGs, and each rifle company was lightly equipped with 6 Bren guns and 6 Boys .55in anti-tank rifles in addition to Lee-Enfield rifles; it seems that hand grenades were also in short supply. (Author's collection)

Indien attached to the Wehrmacht as *Indisches Infanterie Regiment 950*. In February 1943, following Hitler's suggestion, Chandra Bose abandoned the Legion for the greater opportunities offered by Japan's INA, and made the long and dangerous journey to Singapore by German and Japanese submarines. (The Free Indian Legion served in France in 1943–44, but never saw combat.)

In July 1943, Rash Behari Bose handed over the revived or "second" INA in Malaya to Subhas Chandra Bose. The charismatic new leader made energetic attempts to increase its size to at least 50,000. Making even-handed appeals to all the diverse Indian religious communities, he recruited among the civilian diaspora throughout Southeast Asia. Bose sought to organize three divisions each of 10,000 ex-POWs and a fourth 20,000-strong division raised from civilian volunteers. Appreciating the propaganda value of the petitions received from young women who wished to contribute to the fight for independence, in October 1943 Bose agreed the formation of a "Rani of Jhansi" Women's Regiment (named after a heroine of the 1857–59 Indian Mutiny), with at first 150 and eventually 300 armed female volunteers.

The Japanese informed Bose that they could only supply arms for 30,000 men, taken from captured British stores; they suggested that any INA heavy weapons should be mothballed and that its units should become guerrilla elements. However, when Bose became aware of Japanese plans for a major offensive on the northern Burma/India frontier, he successfully argued that the INA should be included. He and units of the INA 1st Division were moved to Burma in January 1944, though they lost much of their heavy equipment when the ship carrying it was sunk.

Organization

In 1942 the Indian National Army under Mohan Singh had had three so-called Guerrilla Regts named the "Gandhi," "Azad," and "Nehru."



There was also a “No. 1 Hindustan Field Force,” which comprised infantry battalions numbered 1st–3rd; an artillery battalion; companies of engineers and transport, and motorized and signals units.

Despite his lack of military experience, in 1944 Subhas Chandra Bose was the commander-in-chief of the expanded “second” INA, with Col J. K. Bhonsle as his chief of staff. The 1st Guerrilla Regt or “Subhas Bde” (Col Shah Nawaz Khan), with three battalions, was an independent formation placed under Japanese Burma Area staff command, and there was also a special Bahadur (“Valiant”) group for penetration missions. The bulk of the INA formed three divisions, of which only the 1st Div was operational before the Japanese offensive opened:

1st Div (Col M.Z. Kiani), of ex-Indian Army troops: 2nd Guerrilla Regt or “Gandhi Bde” (Col Inayat Kiani), 2 bns; 3rd Guerrilla Regt or “Azad Bde” (Col Gulzara Singh), 3 bns; 4th Guerrilla Regt or “Nehru Bde” (eventually, LtCol Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon).

2nd Div (Col Abdul Aziz Tajik), formed in spring 1944 partly from the former No.1 Hindustan Field Force: 1st Inf Regt, with many civilian recruits but also the bulk of INA heavy equipment; 2nd Inf Regt, formed partly by absorbing short-lived 5th Guerrilla Regt; 3rd Inf Regt.

3rd Div, mostly from civilian volunteers, in 6th–8th Infantry Regiments.¹

Operations 1944–1945

A Japanese plan to frustrate an anticipated Allied offensive into Burma from northeast India was authorized in January 1944. This Operation “U-Go” involved an advance in early March by Gen Mutaguchi’s Fifteenth Army (15th, 31st and 33rd Divs) across the northwest border into the Indian state of Manipur, to seize the major communications hub at Imphal and disrupt supplies from the logistic base at Dimapur. This was intended to be a limited three-week offensive, sustained largely by capturing Allied stores. An initial diversionary offensive (“Ha-Go”) would be launched by 55th Div in early February 1944, far further south in the Arakan hills.

Reportedly, Mutaguchi had more ambitious plans for his penetration of India, and was urged by Bose that it would lead to local risings against the British. Enthusiastic about his INA being deployed, Bose was to be disappointed at the scale of its involvement. It was agreed that the 1st Guerrilla Regt would be employed in the Arakan phase, and its 3,000 men arrived in Rangoon in February. Only one of its battalions was committed to action; it reportedly performed well, reaching Mowdok, but the Arakan operation was defeated and called off by February 26.

The main offensive towards Imphal by 15th and 33rd Divs began on March 7, and by April 3 elements of 31st Div were also closing in on the post at Kohima in the Naga Hills to the north, which controlled the road from Dimapur down to Imphal. A spearhead unit of the INA’s Bahadur group seized Moirang about 28 miles south of Imphal, and apparently two units from the INA 1st Div (led in the field by Shah Nawaz Khan) operated on the right flank of 33rd Div, but did not arrive in the front line at Ukhrul until the advance had already been checked. Imphal was not captured, and the small garrison of Kohima held out in an epic defense until relieved by units of the British 2nd Inf Div on April 18.

¹ Main sources: Hugh Toye, *The Springing Tiger* (Cassell, 1959); Peter Ward Fay, *The Forgotten Army* (University of Michigan Press, 1993)

Subhas Chandra Bose (right), commander-in-chief of the INA, hands out prizes to members of its Boys Regt in Singapore in late 1944; some of these youths were reportedly sent to Japan to train as pilots. By this date, the dream of liberating India alongside a Japanese army was dead, but Bose and his fellow leaders maintained the pretense in public. Bose never assumed a military rank, but was styled *Netaji* or “Dear Leader.” His uniform here is a British khaki-brown field service cap with the INA badge on the left of the crown, and a well-tailored khaki-drill bush jacket which he wore with breeches and riding boots. (Author’s collection)



Thereafter intense fighting continued for many weeks, during which Gen Mutaguchi brought the remainder of the INA 1st Div up to the front and part of 2nd Div arrived in Burma. Without heavy weapons, the Indian volunteers were forced to fight only with small arms, machine guns, and a few mortars. British and Indian troops at last re-opened the Kohima–Imphal road on June 22; this marked the final failure of Fifteenth Army’s offensive, and on July 11 the Burma Area Army ordered Gen Mutaguchi to retreat. From a starting strength of some 220,000 men, he had lost about 90,000.

The “three-week campaign” had lasted more than four months; few Allied stores were captured, and by May the under-supplied Japanese troops, and the INA with them, were suffering both serious battle casualties and also increasing starvation and disease. The INA could boast of having raised the flag of independence on Indian soil, and a few volunteers reportedly held on in remote jungle outposts for a few months, but the price they paid was high. Left to fend for themselves by their allies during the long and desperate retreat, the survivors were reduced to eating grass. Out of 6,000 INA volunteers committed, some 400 were killed in action, but at least 1,500 died from hunger and sickness; another 800 surrendered, and more than 700 either deserted or simply disappeared in the jungle.

The defeat of the Japanese “U-Go” offensive spelled the effective end of the Indian National Army, although subsequently 1st Div remnants and 2nd Div elements under Col Prem Saghal still fought on beside Japanese units as Gen Slim’s British Fourteenth Army advanced across Burma. In October 1944, the still determined Chandra Bose visited Japan to argue the futile case for another offensive. On April 23, 1945 he left Rangoon for Singapore, and during a grueling journey by truck and finally on foot his escort of the Rani of Jhansi Regt had to fight off attacks by Aung San’s Burmese guerrillas who had changed sides (see below, “Burma”). After the announcement of Japan’s surrender, Bose flew from Singapore via Saigon to Formosa (Taiwan) on August 17–18, 1945. He then took off again for Manchuria, with some idea of negotiating with

the Soviet Union, but when his Ki-21 transport crashed on takeoff at Taihoku (Taipei) he was seriously burned, and died that night.

Some 16,000 men of the INA were captured at the end of the war, and three of its commanders (one each Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh) were put on trial by the British authorities at Delhi's Red Fort for war crimes and treason. The legal process was fairly scrupulous, and the evidence soon showed that the charges were misplaced, thus increasing public indignation in India. Negotiated independence was imminent, and the defendants' eventual sentences of deportation were never carried out. They and other INA veterans were feted as heroes, and Indian independence followed on August 15, 1947.

BURMA, 1941–1945

Elements among the ethnically diverse (and mutually hostile) peoples of Burma had never accepted Britain's colonial rule since the 1880s. A rebellion was crushed in 1932, and politically active Burmese looked to anyone who might help them gain independence. In 1940 the Japanese contacted a small nationalist group, the Thakins, who had been led since 1937 by Aung San. Colonel Suzuki Keiji offered them the chance to fight the British, and 30 Thakins were secretly sent to the Japanese-occupied Chinese island of Hainan. During July–November 1941 these “Thirty Comrades” were given intensive military training, before being sent to Bangkok in Thailand, where they were allowed to recruit Burmese exiles into what they called the Burmese Independence Army.

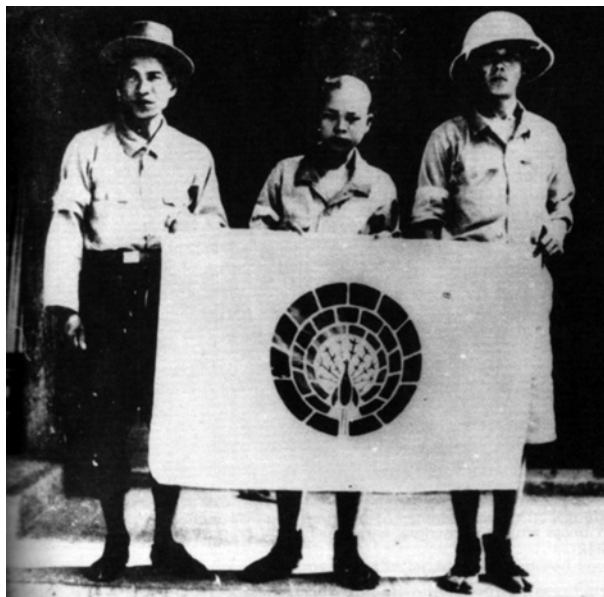
Burmese Independence Army, 1941–1942

When the Japanese invaded Burma in December 1941–May 1942, the BIA – at first only 200 strong, and newly supplied with captured Chinese rifles, machine guns, and mortars – marched with them. As they advanced through southern Burma, the BIA recruited as they went, and rapidly expanded into a force of several thousand.

As reorganized by the Japanese, the BIA had a headquarters with a Japanese commander (Col Suzuki) and 100 Burmese riflemen, and a “Moulmein Group” consisting of the “Kitajima,” “Suzuki,” and “Tanaka” units. The Kitajima and Suzuki were each 850 strong, but the strength of the Tanaka is unrecorded. The group also included parts of two small artillery units, with field guns and howitzers; a communications unit; and two units of baggage train. Additionally, a “Tavoy Group” included the “Igumi” unit of 700 riflemen; the “Tomoto” unit of unknown strength; the remainder of the above-mentioned artillery; some train units; and a water-borne detachment, termed the “Hirayama” unit, of 300 riflemen.

Nearly all the many thousands of new volunteers who flocked to the BIA were from the majority Burman (Bamar) population, and

Three volunteers for the Burmese Independence Army pose with the first design of the BIA flag. This white field with a red stylized peacock design was soon replaced with a second type, as illustrated on Plate C1. The civilian dress and just-visible red/ yellow/ green-striped right armbands are typical of the early BIA volunteers in 1941–42. (Author's collection)



Volunteers of the Burmese Independence Army parade for their commander during their advance through Burma in 1942; compare with Plate C1. Despite the mixture of pith-helmets and civilian trilby hats, these men have been issued with Japanese tropical shirts and shorts while undergoing training on Hainan, and with cavalry bandolier pouches and .303in SMLE rifles captured from British and Indian troops. (Author's collection)



by the time the Japanese had expelled the British from Burma, the BIA claimed a staggering 200,000 members. However, unlike the original hard core, the great majority of these were a poorly disciplined mob who devoted most of their time to killing ethnic minorities such as the Karen people. Local leaders acted as virtual warlords, commanding thousands of bandits and other hangers-on who ravaged the countryside.

Burmese Defense Army, 1942–1943

After the conquest of Burma, the Imperial Japanese Army recognized that their creation had gotten out of hand. Aung San's Thakin leadership wanted to rid themselves of the uncontrollable gangs which were operating under the banner of the Independence Army, and the Japanese agreed to disband the BIA completely and replace it with a much smaller force made up of the better elements. They summoned all the BIA contingents to Rangoon in July 1942, ostensibly to re-arm and re-equip them and issue new uniforms. A selection process was organized, during which the undesirable elements were purged and sent home. The now renamed Burma Defense Army was initially limited to 5,000 men, who were quartered together to create *esprit de corps*.

Discipline was instilled in the new recruits by harsh Japanese instructors using their habitual violent methods, although the original Thakins, who had been given commands in the first two battalions, tried to soften this treatment. The BDA was basically modeled on the Japanese Army as regards training, uniforms, and ranks. It had been given a mixture of captured British weapons and Japanese small arms, and by March 1943 it mustered 8,000 men in five battalions.

Burmese National Army, 1943–1945

Burma was granted token "independence" from Japan in August 1943, and the BDA changed its name to the Burmese National Army. Still under the command of Aung San, the BNA was now expanded to a strength

of 15,000 men, with 10 infantry battalions, 2 engineer battalions, 2 AA battalions and a supply and transport battalion. In a belated attempt to dilute its Burman ethnicity, Aung San persuaded some Karen leaders in the southeastern mountains to help him form a single battalion of Karens.

The Japanese agreed to the establishment of an officers' training school with the aim of eventually graduating professional replacements for the "amateur" Thakins. Aung San had ambitions to turn the BNA into a genuine national army playing an active role in the war against the British, but most of his requests for more rifles, heavy weapons, tanks, and even fighter aircraft were politely sidelined by the Japanese. Burmese were allowed to man captured British AA guns, and a few cadets were sent to Japan to learn how to service aircraft, but Aung San's ambitions were constantly frustrated by the Japanese.

By early 1945 Aung San and his fellow leaders were looking for a way out of their alliance with the Japanese, which they had always regarded simply as a means to the end of true independence. Aung San had secret meetings with the Allies, promising them the services of the BNA in exchange for postwar independence negotiations. In late March 1945 he led most of the BNA out of Rangoon, telling the Japanese that he was going to fight the British Army. Instead his followers started to attack the IJA, and for the next few months they supported the Allied campaign. Burma was granted its independence on January 4, 1948.

Burmese & Indian tribal volunteers

The Japanese always adopted a policy of divide-and-rule by exploiting the various communal tensions in their newly conquered empire, either raising their own local forces or identifying existing groups to support with training and weapons. Although the role of such groups was purely local, the Japanese used photographs of them to promote their image as liberators of the oppressed Asian peoples. In the hills of both western and eastern Burma they enlisted the help of a variety of tribal groups.

Among the western peoples were the Wa of the extensive Shan State in the northwest. These former headhunters were formed into guerrilla units trained by Japanese officers and armed with captured Chinese Mauser rifles. The Japanese also supported two existing armed groups in the west: the Arakan Defense Force, and the Chin Defense Army to the north of them. The ADF had been raised by two Buddhist monks, U Pinnyathiha and U Seinda, and had about 500 men. It was taken over by Commander Kra Hla Aung, and gradually increased in size with Japanese training and weapons. By January 1945, when the whole ADF went over to the Allies, it had grown to about 3,000 men. Little is known of the CDA, but it was probably smaller than the Arakan force, and fought against local Chin groups trained by the Allies.

In the remote regions of northeastern India over the border with Burma a few lesser-known volunteers also fought for the Japanese Empire. The Kuki people of that region still resented the British suppression of a rebellion in 1917–19;

Imperial Japanese Army MajGen Suzuki Keiji, known by the Burmese as "Bo Mogyo," was the main Japanese organizer of the BIA in 1941. He is pictured here wearing Japanese officer's tropical uniform complete with riding boots and *katana* sword, but with BIA collar patches signifying his role as an "adviser" to the Burmese volunteers. (Author's collection)



1943: a young volunteer of the Burma Defense Army is given instruction in handling the Japanese Type 38 rifle; his IJA field cap bears the yellow band and black five-point star badge adopted by the Burmese. His Japanese officer instructor wears on his left sleeve a striped armband marking his attachment to the BDA. (Author's collection)



one hero of that rebellion, Tongkhothang, crossed the Chindwin River in November 1943 and contacted the Japanese occupiers, demanding 400 rifles so that he could mount a campaign against the British. Other Kuki volunteers acted as mountain guides for the Japanese, and fought for them against local British-trained levies. In this shadow war the British even trained some Nepalese to pass as Kukis and infiltrate their camps.

The Naga people of the same region mostly remained loyal to the British Empire, with the exception of one leader named A. Z. Phizo. He was promised independence for Nagaland if Japan conquered India, and led a small band to join the Indian National Army in 1943.

INDONESIA, 1942–1945

After the Japanese conquered the Netherlands East Indies in the spring of 1942, they faced the task of trying to police a vast archipelago of 1,700 islands with a diverse population of more than 60 million.²

The main Dutch Indonesian islands were Sumatra, Java plus Madura and Bali, Celebes, Timor, Ambon, and the western part of New Guinea. Japanese authority was divided geographically: the largest island, Sumatra, was occupied by the IJA's Twenty-Fifth Army; Java and Bali were controlled by the Sixteenth Army; and the islands north and east of Java, including Celebes and South Borneo, by the IJN's Second South Fleet. The Japanese administrators judged the peoples of Sumatra and Java to be more politically aware than other Southeast Asians, and hoped that some would be actively willing to defend their "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere."

Seinendan and Keibodan

In April 1943 the Japanese raised a force of young volunteers known as the *Pedomon Seinendan* ("Youth Column"); the age limits were 14 to

25, later reduced to 22. Primarily raised in urban areas, the Seinendan drilled with dummy rifles, and despite the booty captured from the Royal Netherlands Indies Army (KNIL), the Japanese seldom armed them with anything but sharpened bamboo spears. Their flag was red with a central yellow star and a pair of stylized white wings. By the end of the war, there were over 600,000 Seinendan, including units formed in factories (*Seinendan Kojo*) and on farms (*Seinendan Jogyogo*). On reaching the upper age limit most Seinendan went on to join the *Hei-Ho*, *PETA*, or *Giyugun* (see below).

The *Keibodan* ("Vigilance Corps") was a mass organization for men between the ages of 25 and 35. Also raised from April 1943, it was given various duties including local security patrols and air-raid precautions. The 1,300,000-strong *Keibodan* were given basic military training and bamboo spears to act as a home guard in case of any Allied landings.

By 1945, the Japanese had additionally raised a number of other quasi-military volunteer formations in the various regions of Indonesia. These included a 50,000-strong Student Corps, 80,000 in the *Barisan Berani Mati* ("Suicide Corps"), and a Special Guard Corps of 140,000 for police duty. The vast majority of these volunteers were armed only with bamboo spears, although they might drill with dummy rifles.

Hei-Ho

Japanese sources state that the most useful Indonesian force recruited during the war were the *Hei-Ho*. The role of these auxiliaries, who were raised from mid-1943 on most islands under the Twenty-Fifth and Sixteenth Armies, might be compared with that of the Russian *Hilfswillige* ("Volunteer Auxiliaries") who served with the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front. Service in the *Hei-Ho* attracted some 25,000 former KNIL personnel (or about one-third of prewar KNIL indigenous strength). A large number of Ambonese and Manadonese (northern Celebes) veterans were released,



Volunteers of the Indonesian *Seinendan* mass youth movement carry out arms drill with wooden dummy rifles. The Japanese used this organization to prepare boys for future service in the *PETA* and *Giyugun*. Indeed, there were so many militarized groups in occupied Indonesia that it was difficult for youths to avoid joining one or other of them. (Author's collection)

1943: a column of *Hei-Ho* auxiliaries raised on Java, armed with wooden staves and dressed in uniforms adapted from those worn by the defeated KNIL (see Plate F1). On their left breasts they have a white cloth patch with the Japanese *hinomaru* sun symbol, above another bearing their personal details. (Author's collection)



These *PETA* volunteers on Java wear the Japanese-style combination of an open white shirt collar folded outside an open tunic collar. Their ranks are worn on the tunic lapels, and they display the yellow IJA cap star. Rankers carry ex-KNIL Mannlicher M1895 carbines, and their officers what seem to be cheap copies of the traditional Japanese *katana* sword; two factories produced these during the war, on Java and in Singapore. (Author's collection)

and after taking an oath of loyalty to the Japanese were recruited into the *Hei-Ho* and sent wherever they were needed, including New Guinea and the distant South Pacific islands of New Britain and Bougainville. The *Hei-Ho* served as laborers, nearly all of them still wearing their old KNIL uniforms with new insignia. They were rarely armed except for propaganda purposes, but guards for factories and other facilities received rifles, and other auxiliaries were employed to man AA guns.

The areas of Indonesia under the control of the IJN were slow in forming their own *Hei-Ho Kaigan*, the first units not being raised until March 16, 1944 and trained in May. Some 9,000 were recruited in the



Navy-controlled islands, and another 15,000 on Java and its outliers. Because of the vast territory controlled by the Navy, these personnel were often sent far afield, to the Pacific islands, the Philippines, and even Burma.

PETA

On Java, the most populous and developed island, ex-Netherlands East Indies native police continued to serve the Japanese, and more were recruited. However, with only 8,500 Japanese troops on the island (or about one-sixth the number of its prewar Dutch garrison), it was decided to raise a paramilitary force from the Indonesian population. This *Tentara Sukarela Pembela Tanah Air (PETA)* began to be recruited in October 1943 on Java and nearby Bali (for similar forces on other islands, see below). On Java, 38,870 men were organized into 69 battalions or *daidan* each 440 strong. Although the PETA was supposed to be fully armed, shortages of small arms apparently made this unachievable. In Java, a total of 17,218 rifles, 687 heavy machine guns, and 93 mortars were recorded, and in Bali 960 rifles, 35 machine guns, and 6 mortars. In the closing stages of the war, the Japanese repossessed some 6,900 of the already inadequate issue of small arms, and reduced the size of the PETA. The organization's only military action took place in February 1945, when a few of its units mutinied and killed their Japanese advisers.

Hezbollah

Pursuing their policy of exploiting differences amongst their subject populations, late in 1944 the Japanese sought to raise a new armed militia among the majority Muslim population of Java. Known as the *Hezbollah* ("Army of God"), this force was recruited through local religious schools with the assistance of Muslim *imams*. A large number of volunteers were soon raised, eventually reaching a strength of 50,000 young men. Service seems to have been popular with the volunteers and approved by the wider Muslim population. From among the Hezbollah's ranks special *Jibakutai* ("Dare to Die") suicide units were formed. However, when the Hezbollah was raised in December 1944, there was already a chronic shortage of rifles for Indonesian volunteers, and apart from a few small "model" units, the vast majority of the Hezbollah were armed only with the ubiquitous bamboo spears.

Giyugun

Instead of Java's PETA, Sumatra, the second most important Indonesian island, had an equivalent *Giyugun* ("Volunteer Army") – also called the *Laskar* by Sumatrans. Raised from late 1943 under Twenty-Fifth Army, initially in platoons, by the end of the war it had 30 companies totaling between 7,500 and 9,000 volunteers. Aged 18 to 30, these men were posted away from their home regions for security reasons (a former



Buglers of the Javanese Hezbollah in late 1944; this is one of the rare photographs of the 50,000-strong Muslim militia. Few rifles were available to arm this large force, and the vast majority of them had only bamboo spears. The few who had uniforms seem to have worn the same as PETA, but with a small metal star-and-crescent badge. (Author's collection)

Police cadets of the *Djawa Polisi* move at the double towards a parade ground in Java in 1944 wearing their distinctive light khaki uniform (compare with Plate F3). The majority of Indonesian police appear to have been unarmed, but this elite group of cadets carry ex-KNIL M95 carbines. All rifles were in short supply on Java, and the Japanese handed them out only reluctantly. (Author's collection)



Dutch practice). In eastern Sumatra, 6 companies totaled 1,500 men, and in central Sumatra other companies amounted to 2,000–3,000 men. Aceh, a region of northern Sumatra that had always resisted Dutch rule, contributed about 6,000 volunteers in 20 companies. In addition, a 200-strong *Hikojo Kimutai* for airfield defense was also formed from Giyugun personnel.

Few Sumatrans were armed, but the Japanese kept some rifles in store for use in parades and propaganda photographs. In 1944–45, as the war turned decisively against Japan, Sumatran guerrilla units were organized to resist any Allied invasion. Units raised among resident Indians ("*Pataks*") also patrolled the coastline, armed with ex-KNIL M95 rifles and transported in buses and motor cars.

Other Indonesian paramilitary organizations

The Japanese seem to have raised a whole range of paramilitary volunteer forces despite being unwilling and unable to arm them. These included the *Gakutotai* ("Student Corps") raised in August 1944; the *Barisan Pelopor* ("Vanguard Corps"); and the *Barisan Wanita* ("Women's Corps"). On the Bangka and Belitung Islands, a total of 776 Giyugun were raised, and on the Riouw archipelago 685 volunteers were armed with rifles taken from KNIL armories. Although the Japanese had previously avoided recruiting ethnic Chinese Indonesians, they relented in October 1944, and raised the *Kakyo Keibotai* ("Overseas Chinese Vigilance Corps"), which was a version of the Keibodan (see above).

Equipment

The PETA, Hei-Ho, and Giyugun were given ex-KNIL small arms when available, but also on occasions received some heavier equipment. On

(continued on page 33)

MANCHUKUO & INNER MONGOLIA

1: Infantry LMG-gunner, Manchukuo Army, 1944

2: Cavalryman, Inner Mongolian Army, 1943

3: Volunteer, Asano Bde, Manchukuo Army, 1941



"NANKING CHINA"

1: Wang Ching-wei, 1942

2: Cavalry corporal, 2nd Division, 1943

3: Private 1st class; Kongmoon, 1944



BURMA

1: Standard-bearer, Burmese Independence Army, 1942

2: Aung San, Burmese Defense Army, 1943

3: Lance-corporal, Burmese National Army, 1944





2a



1



2



3

INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY

1: Lance-naik, Malaya, 1942

2: Subedar, Azad Hind DAL, 1943

3: Havildar, Rani of Jhansi Regt; Burma, 1944

THAILAND

1: Infantryman; Shan State, Burma, 1942

2: Standard-bearer, Yuwachon Thahan Youth Corps, 1941

3: FM Phibun Songkhram; Cambodian border, early 1942



INDONESIA

1: *Hei-Ho* volunteer; Java, 1943

2: *Bundancho* standard-bearer, *PETA*; Java, 1944

3: Officer, *Polisi Training Academy*; Java, 1944



PHILIPPINES, MALAYA, AND NEW GUINEA

1: Sgt, Philippines Constabulary; Manila, 1943

2: *Makapili* volunteer; Manila, 1944

3: *Giyugun* volunteer; Malaya, 1944

4: Tribal volunteer; Dutch New Guinea, 1943



BORNEO, SUMATRA, VIETNAM, AND BURMA
1: *Kyodotai* volunteer; Sarawak, 1944
2: Officer, *Giyugun*; Sumatra, 1944
3: *Boa-an* standard-bearer; Vietnam, 1945
4: Volunteer, Arakan Defense Force; Burma, 1944



Java a column of ten ex-KNIL White Scout Cars manned by PETA featured in propaganda magazines. Actual tanks seen in service with the PETA in 1944 were probably only loaned to the Indonesians for propaganda purposes. On Sumatra, the Giyugun were given some ex-British Universal carriers crudely converted into enclosed tankettes. Hei-Ho auxiliaries were trained to use the ex-KNIL 75mm AA guns which some of them had already crewed while in Dutch service.

MALAYA, 1942–1945

The British colony of Malaya was divided into a number of states ruled on behalf of the government by local sultans, and settlements which, together with the port-city of Singapore, were under British control. When Malaya was occupied by the Japanese, the Twenty-Fifth Army's military administration divided it into 11 states. Sultans were allowed to keep limited powers, and the Islamic religion of the Malay population was respected by the occupiers. Malaya was renamed "Malai," and Singapore "Syonan."

Malaya was never going to be offered the mock independence that was proclaimed in Burma, the Philippines, and latterly Indonesia. The occupation began with the massacre of thousands of mostly Chinese residents, who, as elsewhere, were deemed to be a threat to Japanese rule. The Japanese then began to look for ways to use Malaysians in a policing role. The pre-1942 British colonial police force included Malays, Chinese, and expatriate Indian Sikhs, Punjabis, and Tamils; this was largely kept in place after the Japanese occupation, although the Chinese personnel were purged. The police were given further training, and some were issued Lee-Enfield rifles in November 1942.

Gunpo

From May 1943, the Japanese raised their own Hei-Ho type organization (see above) from volunteers aged between 17 and 26. Although all races were supposed to be eligible for service in this *Gunpo*, it was actually made up almost entirely of Malays. Described as uniformed laborers, they performed manual tasks in Japanese camps and were stationed alongside IJA troops. The initial uptake was disappointing, and the Japanese were forced to extend the enlistment deadline several times. Volunteers were offered bribes to join – which even included offers of Japanese brides when Japan had won the war. (Japanese schoolgirls were forced to write letters to Gunpo volunteers as part of their war effort!)

Reaching a strength of 8,000, the Gunpo received some basic military training, including with 40mm Bofors AA guns and 4.5in howitzers. Those who could drive were assigned to transport units, while others loaded and unloaded supply trucks. The personnel were provided with uniforms, pay, and lodging. At first the only arms issued to the Gunpo were a few confiscated hunting rifles and shotguns. Later some Lee-Enfield rifles were issued, but these were later taken back and replaced with bamboo spears; Japan's lack of trust in the Gunpo was demonstrated by the fact that even the spears were subsequently confiscated, and replaced with long wooden staves. Towards the end of the war, some Gunpo were



A Malayan sentry of the *Giyugun* "Volunteer Army" stands guard over a government post in 1944. Like an Indonesian *Hei-Ho*, he is dressed in an IJA field cap with yellow star badge, and IJA tropical shirt and shorts, with the Japanese sun symbol on a white patch above his left breast pocket. Unlike Indonesian volunteers, he is armed with a Japanese Arisaka Type 38 rifle. (Author's collection)



Singapore, Malaya, August 1945: a British officer talks to two young Malayans from one of the pro-Japanese volunteer organizations. In the confused situation that existed in Japanese-occupied territories at the end of the war, there was a widespread fear of Communist activity to exploit the chaotic conditions. Both Japanese soldiers and paramilitaries like these often had to be employed to maintain basic order until enough Allied troops arrived to take over. (Imperial War Museum, SE4642)

reluctantly re-armed by the Japanese and sent against guerrillas on mixed Japanese/Malay operations. Some Chinese were reluctantly accepted, but were limited to basic drill and were never armed.

Giyugun and Giytai

By contrast, the *Giyugun* (“Volunteer Army”), raised from December 1943 with volunteers aged between 16 and 30, was regarded by the Japanese as a military force. By April 1944, it had a strength of 2,000, who were armed with Lee-Enfield rifles and Lewis light machine guns, and some officers received ex-KNIL *klewang* cutlasses. Kept together as a single unit, it was stationed at Johore Baru and was trained by Japanese military instructors. Its initial role was to fight alongside the IJA against the emerging Communist and nationalist guerrillas. The *Giyugun*’s performance in most anti-guerrilla operations was regarded by the Japanese as being half-hearted, and they were suspected of passing arms and ammunition to the mainly Chinese Communist guerrillas of the Malayan People’s Anti-Japanese Army. In an attempt to attract more reliable personnel,

the Japanese gave a popular Malay nationalist, Ibrahim Yaacob, the rank of lieutenant-colonel in the force, and offered commissions to Malay teachers, lawyers, and doctors, but there was little response. At the end of the war in mid-August 1945, the *Giyugun* was disbanded, and several hundred of its volunteers were sent to offer their services to the MPAJA (which soon gave birth to the Malayan People’s Anti-British Army).

The *Giyutai* (“Volunteer Corps”) was a 5,000-strong paramilitary force whose responsibilities lay somewhere between those of the Gunpo and *Giyugun*. Its primary role was the maintenance of law and order, and it was recruited and stationed locally in small units. *Giyutai* volunteers performed guard duties and other auxiliary roles, some being armed with captured British rifles. Its volunteers were also sent to perform coastal protection duties, including preparing defenses and manning AA guns.

Other Malayan paramilitary organizations

One was the “Perak Railway Protection Corps,” organized in December 1943, which was mounted on bicycles. Its role, obviously, was to patrol the railroads running through Perak State and to prevent sabotage. The *Jikeidan* (“Vigilance Corps”), organized in September 1942, was basically an unarmed local home guard whose main role was snooping on their neighbors. In Penang State the *Jikeidan* had 1,730 personnel in October 1943, which rose to 23,000 by February 1944. The popularity of the *Giyugun* and *Giyutai* also led to the formation of a “Malay Women’s Auxiliary Corps” in late 1944.

THE PHILIPPINES, 1942–1945

Background

The Philippines had been under the control and influence of the USA since the defeat of the previous Spanish colonial government in 1898 – a control that had been actively resisted until 1903. When World War II broke out, the Philippines was seven years into a US-agreed ten-year transition to independence, planned for 1944. As in the case of the Indian National Army, some Filipino leaders who cooperated with the Japanese to varying extents are considered today to have been legitimate supporters of the pro-independence cause. Essentially class-based local politics added a further nuance to the situation; under the prewar government, many ordinary Filipinos had resented rule by a landed elite and high-ranking officials, supported by the paramilitary Philippines Constabulary.

When the Japanese took control in early 1942 they found that some politicians were perfectly willing to cooperate, largely to protect their own interests but also in the cause of independence from the USA. José Laurel was chosen as president of the ostensibly “independent” government established by the Japanese, and this so-called “Second Philippines Republic” was duly inaugurated in the capital, Manila on Luzon island, on October 14, 1943. Laurel gathered around him likeminded politicians from a number of basically right-wing parties such as the Ganap and Sakdalista, both founded by Benigno Ramos. The Japanese also found several veterans of the “First Philippines Republic,” which had resisted the US occupation in 1898–1903, who were willing to join. The most prominent of these anti-US veterans was former Gen

1944: Gen Artemio Ricarte (left foreground) inspects the Honor Guard raised to protect President José Laurel of the “Second Philippines Republic.” The guardsmen have been issued with light khaki uniforms and captured US web belts and weapons, which in another photograph include Browning Automatic Rifles. (Author's collection)





This trainee parading at the Tagaytay Training Institute for future leaders of the Philippines' pro-Japanese government wears a dark shirt and a pale khaki cap, and is armed with a .30cal Enfield P-17 rifle with spare clips in a large cloth bandolier. The exact role of the institute is uncertain, but it seems to have trained both military and civilian cadres. (Author's collection)

Artemio Ricarte, the only guerrilla leader to refuse to sign an oath of allegiance to the USA in 1903. The 77-year-old Ricarte was flown back to the Philippines from his exile in Japan, and became an ardent supporter of the Japanese.

By contrast, from spring 1942 various anti-Japanese guerrilla groups began to spring up all over the archipelago. Contacts were soon made with United States Army Forces Far East, leading to the provision of US liaison agents and weapons. Post war, some 277 diverse groups totaling more than 260,000 persons were recognized for their contributions to the resistance.

Philippines Constabulary

This paramilitary force had policed the Philippines since its raising by the US occupation authorities in 1901 to fight anti-US Filipino guerrillas. Disliked by much of the population, during the next 40 years the PC earned a reputation for corruption and for enforcing the supremacy of the Filipino elite. The PC was militarized during the 1930s, and in 1941–42 briefly formed four regiments, which surrendered with the US troops on Bataan in April 1942. When the Japanese occupied the Philippines, they quickly recruited any members

of the Constabulary who were willing to join their new incarnation of the force. The former commander, MajGen Guillermo Francisco, was restored to lead this “Bureau of the Constabulary,” to be replaced in August 1944 by another prewar commander, the respected MajGen Paulino Santos.

Under Japanese control, the Constabulary seldom achieved any successes against the growing anti-Japanese guerrilla forces, and often handed over their rifles to them. Despite this, in November 1943, the hard-pressed Japanese urged President Laurel to launch a recruiting drive to get the PC up to a strength of 40,000 men. They planned to open regional training schools, and offered automatic commissions to former officers of the pre-1942 Constabulary.

Shin'etai

This 250-strong “Honor Guard” was raised to protect President Laurel. Recruited mainly from the families of regime politicians, it was given a smart uniform, and armed with Smith & Wesson revolvers, Springfield M1903 rifles, and Browning Automatic Rifles.

Yoin/ United Nippon

Many Filipinos, mainly members of the Ganap and Ricartista political parties, volunteered to work as laborers for the Imperial Japanese Army, performing the same roles as the Hei-Ho in Indonesia. Known as the *Yoin* by the IJA or “United Nippon” by Filipinos, from 1942 these



Young recruits to the Philippines Constabulary take part in a mass parade in Manila in 1944. They have been issued with light khaki field caps with flat crowns, shirts and shorts, and canvas shoes. Like other collaborationist forces in the Philippines they have been armed with captured US rifles, in this case .30cal Springfield M1903s. (Author's collection)

auxiliaries built roads, drove trucks, loaded supplies at the docks, and carried out other work to assist the Japanese war effort. Of an eventual 32,000 Yoin, the most trusted 3,000 were given military training and political education by the Japanese from January 1943. Some men assigned to guard duties were armed with Springfield M1903 rifles or Winchester shotguns, but these had to be handed in at the end of their shifts. In January 1945, those Yoin who were judged to be most reliable were sent to join the Makapili (see below), presumably taking their rifles with them.

* * *

On September 21–23, 1944, President Laurel's government imposed martial law, and declared war on the USA and Britain.

General MacArthur's promised return to the Philippines at the head of US forces began on October 20, 1944 on the island of Leyte. The resistance by the IJA's 16th Div was so determined that the planned landings on Luzon had to be postponed until January 9, 1945. Thereafter Gen Yamashita's Fourteenth Area Army carried out a stubborn defensive campaign; intensive combat, especially in Manila itself, lasted until March 3, and fighting continued in the mountains until the end of the war in mid-August. During this latter period of the occupation a number of new pro-Japanese groups were raised.

"Peace Army"

Raised by the veteran revolutionary Artemio Ricarte in November 1944, the so-called "Volunteer Army for Peace and Order" was a tiny armed group drawn from members of various pro-Japanese political parties. Its 100-odd members were given light khaki uniforms by the Japanese, and armed with Enfield P-17 rifles. The only insignia was a white armband stenciled with "PA" worn on the left sleeve.



This unclear but extremely rare image of Filipino *Makapili* shows a night parade in late 1944. It appears that some Japanese personnel are mixed in with the Filipino recruits of this strongly pro-Japanese group. All of them appear to have been issued Type 38 rifles and leather belts with ammunition pouches despite their motley clothing. The *Makapili* made themselves widely hated, and any who survived the lynch-mobs at the end of the war were usually put on trial by the postwar Philippines government. (Alejandro De Quesada Historical Archives)

Makapili

This was the popular title of the *Makabayang Katipunan ng mga Pilipino* (“Patriotic League of Filipinos”) organized on November 10, 1944 by Benigno Ramos and Gen Ricarte. (Much to President Laurel’s annoyance, the *Makapili* proved to be loyal first and foremost to the Japanese rather than to his government, so to save face he was given the purely honorary title of “Highest Supreme Adviser of the *Makapili*.”)

The Japanese intended the *Makapili* to act as a “catch-all” for any Filipinos who were willing to serve them – at first as guards for Japanese and government facilities, but later actively, in the bitter campaign against pro-US guerrillas. From an initial 300–400 men in the Manila area, armed only with bayonets and bamboo spears, the *Makapili* reached a strength of some 5,000. They quickly received 2,000 rifles, and were supplied with more as these became available. As the *Makapili* were the only puppet force that the Japanese really trusted they were given priority for weapons, and by the beginning of 1945 most members already had a revolver, rifle or shotgun.

In the last months of the war the *Makapili* were given the role of dealing with anti-Japanese guerrillas and other “hostile elements.” They became infamous for their cruelty, and executed large numbers of civilians. As the Japanese retreated from Manila into the mountains many of the *Makapili*, along with their families, went with them. Fearing

the retribution of the Filipino guerrillas who were supporting the US Army's advance, some died fighting rather than risk capture. After the war, hundreds were put on trial for treason.

"Bisig Army"

In November 1944, a new political group was formed by young men from families associated with pre-1942 right-wing political parties. In January 1945, one of the ideological leaders of the Makapili, Aurelio Alvero, used this "New Leaders Association" to create a 500-strong military unit known as the *Bisig-Bakal ng Tagala* or "Bisig Army" (Bisig is a ward in the Valenzuela district of greater Manila). This reportedly cooperated with the Japanese during their defense of the capital in February 1945.

OTHER PRO-JAPANESE FORCES

Borneo

The huge but sparsely populated island of Borneo was divided between a British colony in the northwest and the much larger Dutch-ruled central and southern regions. The British-ruled territory was administratively divided before 1942 into Sarawak, the kingdom of Brunei, and North Borneo.

Following their invasion in 1942, in October 1943 the Japanese raised a North Borneo "Volunteer Corps" called the *Kyodotai*, with a strength of 1,280 men organized into five companies. The volunteers were intended to undertake a two-year training course, of basic training for the first six months followed by 18 months' instruction with heavier weapons and radios. As was often the case elsewhere, the men were also given Japanese-language classes. Volunteers were recruited exclusively from the indigenous population, no expatriate Chinese being allowed to



Members of a small unit of Burmese Wa tribesmen taking part in training by a Japanese Army officer in 1943. The Wa of eastern Burma were just one of a number of tribes whose rivalries IJA intelligence officers became adept at exploiting. Given captured Chinese rifles, the Wa were paid to fight against other, pro-British Burmese highlanders. (Author's collection)

join. Another paramilitary force raised in North Borneo in 1943 was the *Jikeidan* "Auxiliary Vigilance Corps," for air-raid precautions.

New Guinea

The vast and undeveloped island of New Guinea, characterized by almost trackless jungled mountains, was divided before 1942, into the western half, which was a province of the Netherlands East Indies, and the eastern half administered by Australia.

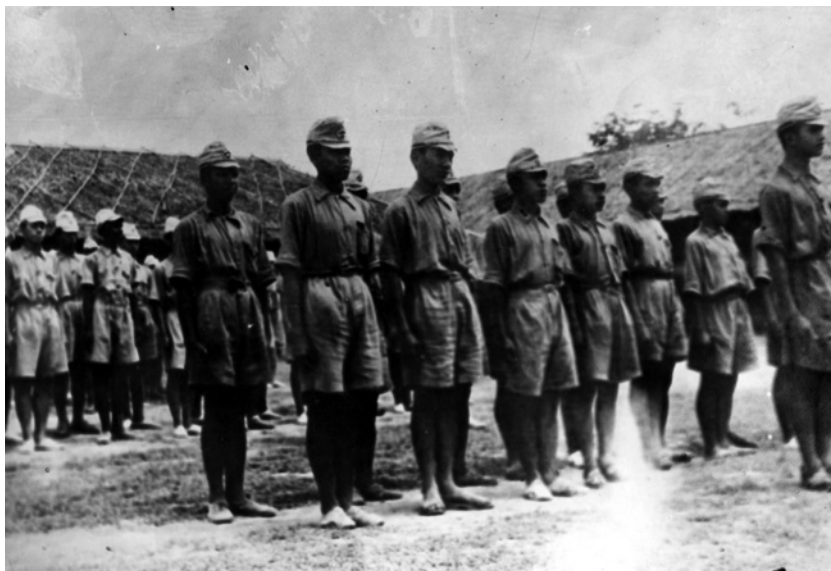
In Dutch New Guinea, members of the warlike tribal peoples of the interior who were considered "friendly to Japan" were being enlisted from the early months of the Japanese occupation. In 1942, a school, the *Hirata Tai*, was set up to train them as armed police, and from December 1943 there was widespread military training. According to reports, "thousands" volunteered to serve Japan, and several native units known as *Sukarela* were armed with old Dutch M1871/88 Beaumont-Vitelli rifles. As well as the usual guard duties, some volunteers were tasked with bringing in downed Allied airmen (who faced immediate execution). During the major fighting against Australian and later US forces in the east and center of the island in 1942–45, the Japanese (like the Allies) recruited locals to act as porters, and organized some into armed units.

Pacific islands

The various occupied Pacific island groups saw the recruitment of a number of small military and paramilitary units during 1942–45.

On New Britain, an island in the Bismark archipelago, auxiliary policemen drill in front of Japanese instructors in 1943. Some of the most trusted auxiliaries in the Pacific islands were issued with rifles by the IJN occupation forces when they were available. Others, like these men, had to make do with a "smart" uniform, a cheap tin badge and a wooden stave to keep their fellow islanders in order. (Author's collection)





Pro-Japanese paramilitaries somewhere in the Pacific in 1942–45; the photo offers few clues as to the exact whereabouts. The original press caption says: “Many young men of a large island in the Pacific have been called to battle for Greater East Asia. These volunteers are to be used as auxiliary staff for air raid duties.” No insignia are visible on their basic tropical uniforms, and they are unarmed. (Author’s collection)

These were organized largely by the Imperial Japanese Navy’s military and security police, the *Tokkei-Rai* (equivalent to the IJA’s *Kenpeitai*), or by Japanese civilian residents of the islands. In Japanese-controlled Micronesia, units of *Teishintai* were raised on several islands including Ponape and Palau, as well the former US island of Guam. On Palau, a small company of *Giyu Kirkoni-tai* “Patriotic Shock Troops” was raised by a charismatic intelligence officer, Capt Morikawa. Totaling just 80 men, it was given intensive training for six months, but armed only with bamboo spears. Thirty of these men were sent to New Guinea, where half of them were killed.

EMPIRE OF VIETNAM, 1945

Prewar French Indochina was divided into the colonies of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, each with its own pliant royal family but under French occupation, control, and administration. In September 1940, a couple of months after France’s defeat by Germany and the installation of the collaborationist Vichy regime, the Japanese demanded access to Indochinese territory and airfields. The French governor’s refusal prompted an immediate invasion of Tonkin (North Vietnam) from China, and after two days’ fighting, the French were forced to agree to the first of many concessions. The 35,000 Japanese troops who subsequently occupied Indochina took over French military bases and airfields, but left the Vichy administration officially in control of their borders (though see above, under “Thailand”) and internal security. The prewar garrison of Colonial, Foreign Legion, and indigenous units was small, armed with outdated equipment, and cut off from reinforcement and resupply.

In their usual game of divide-and-rule, the Japanese – from 1942, but especially from 1944, when they became wary of possible Allied landings in Cochinchina (South Vietnam) – hedged their bets by encouraging various nationalist groups and religious sects. The most powerful was the 300,000-strong Cao Dai sect, which was building a belligerent militia



Men of one of the small units raised in the eastern, Australian-administered half of New Guinea during its partial Japanese occupation. Unusually, they have been issued with the most modern captured weapons – US .30cal M1 Garand semi-automatic rifles. Many volunteers on this vast and partly impenetrable island also worked for the Allies, and the Australian Army raised three effective local infantry battalions in 1942–44; however, some groups among the diverse tribal population were persuaded to support the Japanese.
(Author's collection)

in Tay Ninh province. The Japanese provided training and a limited number of rifles to the Cao Dai, and also to the smaller but still significant Hoa Hao sect of Chau Doc province. They did not assist the Communist-led Viet Minh, who since 1942 had been quietly installing an intelligence network and an embryo guerrilla force in the hills along the Chinese border in Tonkin (latterly with help from the American OSS, in return for an unfulfilled promise to engage the Japanese).

With the liberation of France by the Allies in 1944, the Vichy regime was destroyed, and with it Japan's ability to manipulate the Indochina garrison. In March 1945, the Japanese occupiers carried out a lightning coup, demanding the surrender of all French troops and officials. Any who resisted were ruthlessly massacred, and the survivors were disarmed and imprisoned.

Japanese officers persuaded France's puppet Annamese emperor, Bao Dai, to form an ostensibly independent government under their sponsorship. The short-lived Empire of Vietnam lasted only from March until August 1945. It was theoretically supported by the Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, and various other armed groups, but its only regular military force was a Civil Guard, formed with reluctant recruits from the

indigenous pre-1945 French paramilitary *Garde Indochinoise*.

Japan also offered nominal independence to the traditional monarchies of Cambodia and Laos. During these few months the Japanese recognized that they could not rely upon any existing local forces, and plans were put in motion to raise three separate 1,000-strong *Giyugun* units, one each in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. In the short time available to them, volunteers were recruited and training did begin, but little progress was made before the A-bombs brought Japanese surrender in August 1945. (Many Japanese weapons then fell into the hands of various insurgents, and in Tonkin a significant number of Japanese would join the Viet Minh as instructors).

PLATE COMMENTARIES

A: MANCHUKUO & INNER MONGOLIA

A1: Infantry light machine-gunner, Manchukuo Army, 1944

The Manchukuo Army wore a similar uniform to that of the Imperial Japanese Army but with a distinctive field cap and insignia. The cap has a flatter crown than the IJA type, and bears Manchukuo's wreathed five-color star (clockwise from top: yellow/ black/ white/ dark blue/ red.). The Army retained the Chinese M1930 khaki uniform in wool for winter and cotton for summer, as here. On the tunic collar patches, he displays a separate "2" and "8" identifying his unit, and on transverse infantry-red shoulder tabs the three yellow five-point stars of the rank of *shang-teng-ping*, equivalent to superior private or lance-corporal. The tunic and semi-breeches (tapered trousers) show contrasting shades of khaki cotton. His boots are Japanese brown leather, as is his equipment. The light machine gun is the 6.5mm M1922 "Taisho 11"; this was also still in service with the IJA, as later models could not be produced in sufficient quantities.

A2: Cavalry private 1st class, Inner Mongolian Army, 1943

This trooper wears an IJA winter uniform, but his fur hat bears the blue enamel five-point star with a central yellow disc used by Inner Mongolia from the late 1930s. Note too, on the shoulders of his fur-lined Japanese special-issue winter coat, the tabs in the blue color used by all branches of this army, bearing the two stars of this rank copied from the Japanese sequence (the IJA had three grades of private, identified by one to three stars). The rest of his uniform and equipment are standard IJA issue, including a pair of prized cavalry boots; Mongolian cavalry used their own soft boots until at least 1937, when a higher level of uniformity was introduced. He is armed with the "snub-nosed" Type 44 (M1911) IJA cavalry carbine, with an integral fold-back bayonet. At least three different types of Inner Mongolian flags were in use. This man's armband and flag feature the variant usually seen in use by the cavalry; another flag had a blue field with a centered yellow bow-and-quiver motif.

A2a: Inner Mongolian cap badge, described to the author by an IJA veteran who had served with the Inner Mongolian Army.

A3: White Russian volunteer, Asano Brigade; Manchukuo Army, 1941

This brigade was recruited from among the large community of White Russian émigrés who had escaped from the Soviet Union in the early 1920s. They, and their sons, were often eager to join a pro-Japanese and anti-Soviet army, and Japanese "advisers" to the Manchukuo government believed that they would be a useful asset if war again broke out with the Soviet Union. He wears basically IJA summer uniform, with old Type 5 (M1930) transverse rank tabs on the shoulders. On his breast, the brigade's distinctive cloth badge shows a cross in the Russian colors of white, red, and blue, which also appears on his trumpet-banner. The Japanese M1932 steel helmet was widely used in the Manchukuo Army at this date.

B: "NANKING CHINA"

B1: Wang Ching-wei, 1942

The leader of the puppet "Re-organized Government" in Nanking and commander-in-chief of its military forces wears a Chinese Nationalist Army officer's woolen uniform, but with the Nanking Army cap badge and his unique collar

insignia. The cap badge copied the Nationalist white-sunburst-on-blue-sky design, but with a red outer border. This is repeated in miniature at the front of his gilt metal collar bars bearing three gold triangles. For an inspection parade, he wears white dress gloves, and carries a Nationalist Army officer's saber.

B2: Cavalry corporal, 1943

Again, the uniform is almost identical to that of the Nationalist Army, including the sunburst decal on the German M1935 helmet. Collar ranks followed the Nationalist system of triangles and bars (see MAA 424, page 35), but sometimes bore an Arabic numeral indicating the wearer's division. Much of the weaponry came from captured Nationalist stores, and this man has received a Belgian FN-made Mauser M1924 short rifle in 7.92mm caliber. Obscured here are two cloth bandoliers as in A3. The flag is the same as the Nationalist Army type with the addition of a yellow pennant at the top of the staff bearing Chinese characters reading "Peace, Anti-Communism, National Construction." This was added at the insistence of Wang Ching-wei's Japanese sponsors, to emphasize the shared hatred of Communism.



Nanking Army light machine-gunner posing with an ex-Nationalist Army 7.92mm ZB26 for a propaganda photo during joint maneuvers with IJA units in 1943; compare with Plate B. Other photos in this sequence show Japanese and Nanking soldiers sharing a joke and a cigarette, but in reality very few IJA soldiers had any respect for their Chinese allies. However, when whole Nationalist formations went over to the Nanking Army they tended to perform better than more recently recruited "puppet" units. (Author's collection)

B3: Private 1st class; Kongmoon, 1944

Away from the capital at Nanking the troops nominally subject to Wang Ching-wei's regime were often poorly dressed and armed. This ill-equipped infantryman from Guangdong province in the distant southeast belongs to one of the regional armies commanded by ex-Nationalist officers. His cap is the standard pale gray cotton type worn by most Nationalist troops, but with the Nanking badge. A US intelligence report shows this black cotton uniform (though in that instance worn with a visored service cap). The two-star rank of trained private is sewn to both sleeves, and his unit is identified by a blue-and-yellow breast patch. His basic equipment comprises two cloth bandoliers with tie-taped pockets, and his Hanyang rifle is a Chinese-produced copy of the German M1888.

C: BURMA

C1: Standard-bearer, Burmese Independence Army, 1942

The volunteers of the Burmese Independence Army in 1941–42 were dressed in improvised combinations of military and civilian clothing; the popular cork sun helmet was a privately purchased item. His Japanese tropical shirt and shorts were donated to the BIA by their instructors on the Chinese island of Hainan. On his left sleeve the volunteer wears a tricolor armband in the Burmese national colors of yellow, green, and red; other armbands carried symbols indicating branch of service. Although his puttees are Japanese his shoes are his own, and the captured British



This photograph from a Japanese propaganda magazine shows a squad of the Burmese National Army on parade in 1944; see Plate C3. Just visible here is the only change to the uniform following the retitling from Defense Army to National Army in 1943: a new system of rank insignia, with white five-point stars and bars on green collar patches. (Author's collection)

.455in Webley revolver that he has been given is carried in its webbing holster on a civilian leather belt. The flag is the second type used by the BIA, with four red lightning bolts added to the pre-1885 peacock symbol of the Burmese royal family, on a green ground.

C2: Aung San, Burmese Defense Army, 1943

The commander-in-chief is seen here in the uniform of the second incarnation of the Burmese military under the Japanese, the Burmese Defense Army of 1942–43. His Japanese field cap has the yellow band and the yellow-backed black star badge adopted by the Burmese. His mustard-brown IJA Type 98 (M1938) woolen officer's uniform was worn during a visit to Japan; he wore the more suitable cotton version in the heat of Burma. His unique collar insignia show the peacock symbol on a yellow cloth disc behind a Japanese major-general's gold rank bar. During his visit to Japan, Aung San was presented with the Order of the Cherry Blossom, and he also carries an officer's-quality *katana* "samurai" sword, as presented to favored officers in several pro-Japanese armies in 1941–45.

C3: Lance-corporal, Burmese National Army, 1944

The BNA, instituted in 1943 as the army of the newly "independent" state of Burma, inherited the leadership and personnel of the BDA, and was only slightly reorganized. This junior NCO wears the light khaki field cap with the usual yellow band and black star badge. On his cotton shirt he displays the new white-and-green rank collar patch system introduced in 1944. Attached above his left pocket is a white strip bearing his name and unit in Japanese characters. His trousers and darker puttees with cross-tapes are standard IJA issue, and his shoes seem to be cut-down canvas and rubber *tabis*. His late-war Japanese belt and three cartridge pouches (one at the rear) are made from rubberized canvas, which might appear either light or reddish khaki. The BNA's standard personal weapon was the Type 38 rifle, and the standard light machine gun the Type 11.

D: INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY

D1: Lance-naik, Malaya, 1942

This lance-corporal belongs to the first incarnation of the INA led in 1942 by Mohan Singh. On his ex-British Indian Army khaki-drill uniform, he displays its insignia on his left sleeve: a white disc edged with saffron (inner), white and green, bearing a brown eight-point star with a central red disc, above crossed tricolor flags and "INA." His rank is shown by the single white bar on the upper sleeves. His Mk II steel helmet, and Pattern 37 webbing equipment (belt, braces, "universal" pouches, water-bottle carrier, and bayonet frog, plus usually the "small pack" haversack) are retrieved from captured British stores in Singapore. He has been re-issued one of the many thousands of .303in Lee-Enfield (SMLE) rifles captured during the British defeat – the same type of weapon he had surrendered a few months previously.

D2: Subedar, Indian National Army; Azad Hind DAL, 1943

This Sikh first lieutenant serves with the second creation of the INA organized under Subhas Chandra Bose in 1943, and belongs to the politico-military DAL organization which was responsible for the future administration of any liberated Indian territory. On his khaki turban he has the tin INA badge worn by all volunteers regardless of rank. The rest of his uniform is ex-British, comprising a khaki-drill bush jacket and trousers with black leather boots. His red-piped shoulder

straps bear two blue ranks bars above "INA." He has the INA badge pinned to his breast, and the yellow sleeve patch is that of DAL, bearing an image of the famous Red Fort at Delhi. On his British webbing belt is a holstered .38in Enfield No.2 revolver.

D2a: INA badge.

D3: *Havildar*, Rani of Jhansi Regiment; Burma, 1944

The "Queen of Jhansi" Regt, established under a female activist named Lakshmi Sahgal, was named after a famously courageous heroine of the 1857–59 Indian Mutiny (nowadays termed the First War of Independence). The volunteer's field service cap bears the usual INA tin badge. This first type of overall uniform was designed to be practical while protecting the modesty of the young women volunteers, with jodhpur-style legs. On the right are the INA badge and a circular tricolor badge of the Indian Independence League, and on her upper sleeves the three white bars of sergeant's rank. Her brown leather equipment is from captured Netherlands East Indies stores supplied by the Japanese. The 6.5mm Dutch Mannlicher M1895 carbines from the same source were more suitable for the slightly built young women than their original .303in SMLE rifles, many of which were, in any case, lost in a British air raid.

E: THAILAND

E1: Infantry private; Shan State, Burma, 1942

This soldier in Burmese territory is wearing his greenish-khaki cotton summer uniform, with infantry collar badges, tapered semi-breeches, puttees, and brown leather boots. His steel helmet is the Thai version of the French Adrian M1915, with a brass *chakra* symbol on the front. His brown leather belt supports two ammunition pouches and the bayonet scabbard for his Thai Type 46 Mauser, and he has a prewar British-type webbing pack.

E2: Standard-bearer, *Yuwachon Thahan* Youth Corps, 1941

The Youth Corps was effectively a Hitler Youth-type organization, in that its members received military training as soldiers-in-waiting for the Thai Army. Although the Japanese violation of Thai territory on December 8, 1941 in order to invade Burma "officially" had Thai government permission, a unit of the Youth Corps was mobilized to resist Japanese troops at Nang Sang Bridge. A ceasefire was quickly ordered, and the pro-Japanese government of Field Marshal Phibun was soon formally aligned with the Japanese. This flag-bearer wears the standard Youth Corps uniform, with its brass badge on a visored cap. His pale khaki cotton shirt and shorts are worn with black woolen socks and black leather shoes. Above the breast pocket he displays the badge of the Thai Army, a crossed weapons badge on his collar, and on his shoulder straps two small brass chevrons of rank. All standards in the Thai Army were of similar design, with the *chakra* symbol overlapping the central blue stripe. Streamers on the flag staff were presented to military and Youth Corps units for good service or for taking part in a particular campaign.

E3: Field-Marshal Phibun Songkhram; Cambodian border, early 1942

Field Marshal Phibun Songkhram, then aged 44, was the minister of defense and virtual dictator of Thailand in 1941–44. Here he is visiting the frontline after the border war with the Vichy French garrison in Indochina. He wears standard Thai officers' greenish-khaki uniform with a visored cotton cap



Late 1944: a tricolor flag of the Indian National Army (saffron/ white/ green, with three gold-fringed edges) is paraded by the INA women's unit, the Rani of Jhansi Regt; compare with Plate D3. The color party are armed with swords instead of the rifles usually issued. Although this small unit, about 300 strong, did not take part in the 1944 campaign, they did later provide the bodyguard of the INA leader Subhas Chandra Bose in 1945, protecting him from Burmese guerrillas during the INA leadership's retreat through Burma to Malaya. (Author's collection)

bearing the officers' gilt badge. His tunic of fine cotton material has gold braid shoulder boards bearing field marshal's rank insignia of a gold Thai crown and crossed batons. Phibun was originally an artillery officer, and retains the collar badges of that arm of service, showing a crown above crossed cannons. Officers' riding breeches and black leather boots complete the uniform, with a "Sam Browne" belt supporting a holstered 7.65mm Belgian FN-Browning M1900 semi-automatic pistol.

F: INDONESIA

F1: *Hei-Ho* volunteer; Java, 1943

Most Indonesian volunteers' uniforms were either adapted from those of the defeated Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (KNIL) in which many had until recently served, or newly tailored using cloth taken from Dutch stores. This unusually heavily armed *Hei-Ho* volunteer is dressed in a drab green ex-KNIL M1937 uniform with new insignia added. His Japanese-style field cap bears the IJA's yellow five-point star badge. The tunic has a stand-and-fall collar with blue patches bearing the two yellow rank stars of private 1st class. The white linen patch above the left breast pocket displays a Japanese sun in the center and characters indicating his unit, while the long strip on his right breast bears his personal identification in Japanese characters. Woolen puttees and black canvas-and-leather field shoes are also from KNIL

stores. Providing security at a vulnerable facility, he has been issued with an M15 shortened 6.5mm Madsen LMG, the standard KNIL squad light automatic. More common is a cut-down version of the KNIL's characteristic Marechaussee *klewang* cutlass, scabbarded on his brown leather belt.

F2: Bundancho standard-bearer, PETA; Java, 1944

PETA enlisted men were dressed in similar uniforms to the Hei-Ho, while their senior ranks usually wore Japanese-style uniforms made from KNIL cloth. Nevertheless, this lowly squad leader wears a jacket modeled on the IJA's tropical tunic and made from the usual KNIL material; the blue collar patches on the lower lapels bear the *bundancho*'s broad yellow stripe (lance-corporal equivalent). He wears a locally made version of the Japanese field cap complete with the yellow star badge, an ex-IJA white cotton shirt and Japanese-style semi-breeches, with ex-KNIL cavalry gaiters and boots. The flag of the PETA bears the unit identification on the white cloth patch, and the carved hardwood staff is topped with a cherry-blossom device. The revolver holstered at his hip is probably an old Dutch 11mm M1873.

F3: Officer, Polisi Training Academy; Java, 1944

The 5,000-strong paramilitary police force raised in Java in 1943 was well armed and uniformed. This officer on the faculty of the Police Academy in Djakarta is wearing the khaki uniform which was also worn by its officer cadets, and which



A few Indonesian *Hei-Ho* volunteers performing security duties were issued with weapons taken from KNIL armories, such as the 6.5mm Mannlicher M95 rifle carried by this motorcyclist in 1943. He is wearing a Japanese field cap complete with yellow star badge, and an adapted KNIL tunic with identification patches as worn in Plate F1. (Author's collection)

appears to have come from the captured stores of the Royal Netherlands East Indies Air Force (ML-KNIL). It was adopted by the rest of the *Djawa Polisi* in April 1944 to replace their earlier green uniforms, which had been worn with green ex-KNIL visored caps with an enamel Japanese-flag frontal badge. This officer's status is indicated by the yellow braid around the red cap band, with a cloth version of the badge of the Japanese *Keibodan* organization. The jacket has red lapel patches with two gold five-point rank stars (first lieutenant equivalent). His lighter khaki shirt, black necktie, breeches, and black riding boots all appear to be from ML-KNIL stores. The sidearm is an unaltered model of the *klewang* fighting sword.

G: PHILIPPINES, MALAYA & NEW GUINEA

G1: Sergeant, Philippines Bureau of Constabulary; Manila, 1943

In 1942, a new incarnation of the Philippines Constabulary known as the "Bureau of Constabulary" was raised by the Japanese. The uniform was light khaki; this straw sun helmet was worn mostly for parades, while the service uniform included a Japanese-style cap. On the front of his helmet the sergeant displays the silver floral badge introduced in 1943, when President Laurel ordered a change from the prewar US-type insignia to designs with a more Filipino character. The shirt is worn with a necktie, khaki slacks and brown military shoes. Above the breast pocket, he has a silver shield which carries the same device as the hat badge and his engraved individual number, e.g. "B165." His rank is shown on the shirt collar, by three gold stars on a red bar; oddly, he also wears three inverted red chevrons on his upper sleeves, which may be a throwback to the prewar Constabulary. His brown leather belt has a large brass buckle plate bearing the flower badge and the word "Constabulary." He is armed with an ex-Philippines Army .30cal Enfield P-17 rifle, as used by the Constabulary alongside the Springfield M1903.

G1a: Constabulary badge from 1943 onwards.

G2: Makapili volunteer; Manila, 1944

In late 1944, this most pro-Japanese Filipino paramilitary organization was organized in a number of units to serve as auxiliaries for the IJA, and these were eventually issued with rifles. One eyewitness noted that in 1945 some Makapili wore US M1917A1 steel helmets captured in 1942. Some were also issued with items of US-type blue denim fatigue uniform worn by some Filipino troops in 1942, but this man's shirt is a civilian item. Seen at the inauguration parade of the Makapili in December 1944, he has yet to be issued with the complete Japanese uniform worn by most of his comrades. On his left sleeve, he wears a red armband with the symbol of the pro-Japanese Kalibapi political organization to show his allegiance; when the Makapili went in action beside the IJA they were usually issued with a white armband bearing the red *hinomaru* sun. The rest of his ad-hoc uniform is a pair of donated Japanese tropical shorts and civilian canvas-and-rubber "deck shoes." Most of the 5,000 or so active Makapili were given Japanese Type 38 rifles along with leather belts and pouches.

G3: Giyugun volunteer; Malaya, 1944

When the occupying Japanese Twenty-Fifth Army created the *Giyugun* "Volunteer Army" and the *Giyutai* "Volunteer Corps" in the country they renamed as Malai, they recruited among the Malay and Indian populations while continuing to

persecute the local Chinese. This Malay volunteer wears Japanese tropical uniform with field cap, shirt and shorts, worn with civilian white socks and black canvas shoes. Above his left pocket is a white linen patch, with a red sun in the center and the volunteer's name and unit in Japanese characters. A right breast patch bears a red triangle beside a yellow rank star on a red bar. He is armed with an ex-British Army .303in SMLE rifle, and has been issued with British M1908 webbing, as still held in local storage in 1941–42.

G4: Tribal volunteer; Dutch New Guinea, 1943

The Japanese garrison of the territory of West New Guinea was totally inadequate for an effective occupation, and exploited endemic tribal rivalries to raise a number of units of supposedly pro-Japanese volunteers. This volunteer has been given an IJN white summer field cap and shirt and wears them with his own khaki shorts; he goes barefoot, as he always has done. On his left breast is sewn a typical Japanese sun patch. He is delighted to have been given any firearm – even this old 11mm Beaumont-Vitelli M1871/88 taken from the armories of the pre-1942 Dutch garrison.

H: BORNEO, SUMATRA, VIETNAM & BURMA

H1: *Kyodotai* volunteer; Sarawak, 1944

Northern Borneo's *Kyodotai* "Volunteer Corps" was another organization armed and equipped by its Japanese masters. The field cap with a Japanese badge, tropical shirt, shorts, and canvas and rubber "deck shoes" are conventional, but the badge on his shirt was unique to the Northern Borneo *Kyodotai*: a white patch with a red border and red five-point star. His cast-off Japanese equipment comprises a rubberized canvas belt with two pouches and a canvas haversack, and he is lucky enough to have been issued with a Type 38 rifle.

H2: Officer, *Giyugun*; Sumatra, 1944

This junior officer equivalent wears IJA tropical uniform; above the left breast pocket he displays the circular badge of the *Giyugun* "Volunteer Army", bearing the rising sun, crossed rifles, a steel helmet, and the Indonesian word *Seokala*, "Volunteer." The red rank patch above his right pocket bears a star above two gold bars. In this case his sword is the Japanese NCOs' version.

H3: *Boa-an* standard-bearer; Empire of Vietnam, summer 1945

When the Japanese took control of French Indochina in March 1945 and installed the Annamese Emperor Bao Dai as ruler of Vietnam, they coerced the French colonial *Garde Indochinoise* into serving him and renamed it *Boa-an*, "Civil Guard." Like many other Japanese puppet forces it proved to be unreliable; in North Vietnam guardsmen were prone to handing over their weapons to the Communist-led Viet Minh resistance (and a number of them were actually infiltrators planted by the Viet Minh to undermine the Guard's already low morale). This man wears the M1935 summer *tenué d'exercice* of his former French service, but with insignia removed, and note a yellow imperial armband above his left elbow to show his new allegiance. The standard is the newly designed flag of the Empire of Vietnam based on that of the province of Annam. He is armed with an 8mm Berthier M1916 carbine, which was widely issued to Indochinese colonial troops before 1940.

H4: Volunteer, Arakan Defense Force; Burma, 1944

By 1944 the Japanese *Nishi Kikan* or "Western Organization" intelligence group had raised several ethnic Burmese armed

forces, including the Arakan Defense Force recruited among the Buddhist population of Arakan state in western Burma. This man's ex-British Indian Army khaki-drill shirt and shorts are worn with a local bamboo sun hat, and above the breast pocket is the "N" insignia of the *Nishi Kikan* below the vertical rank bar of a "levy" or private. His rifle is an old M1893 Long Lee-Enfield MkII taken from British stores, and his equipment is a mixture of captured British and donated Japanese gear, plus a traditional Burmese *dha* sword.



This Indonesian *Kenpeicho* volunteer armed with an ex-KNIL Mannlicher M95 is serving as an auxiliary for the dreaded IJA *Kenpeitai* military and security police. He wears IJA tropical uniform with Japanese-style collar rank patches, and a white armband with "MP" stenciled in Japanese above English characters. (Author's collection)

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OSPREY PUBLISHING
Bloomsbury Publishing Plc
PO Box 883, Oxford, OX1 9PL, UK
1385 Broadway, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10018, USA
E-mail: info@ospreypublishing.com
www.ospreypublishing.com

OSPREY is a trademark of Osprey Publishing Ltd
This electronic edition published in 2020 by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

First published in Great Britain in 2020

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A catalog record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: PB: 9781472836960; eBook: 9781472836977; ePDF: 9781472836946;
XML: 9781472836953

Editor: Martin Windrow
Index by Rob Munro
Typeset by PDQ Digital Media Solutions, Bungay, UK

Osprey Publishing supports the Woodland Trust, the UK's leading woodland conservation charity.

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to Joyce C. Lebra

Acknowledgments

This book would not have been possible without the assistance of a number of fellow researchers. Over the last 25 years I have received information from several sources to whom I am most grateful, including James Boyd, Prof Ricardo T. José, Minoru Kamada, Prof E. Bruce Reynolds, Alessandro de Quesada, John Verbeek, and Paul V. Walsh. Most of the photographs reproduced here come from wartime Japanese propaganda publications.

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The publishers regret that they can enter into no correspondence upon this matter.

Abbreviations used in this text

AA	anti-aircraft
ADF	Arakan Defense Force
Bde	brigade
BDA	Burmese Defense Army
BIA	Burmese Independence Army
BNA	Burmese National Army
Cav	cavalry
CDA	Chin Defense Army
Div	division
IJA	Imperial Japanese Army
IJN	Imperial Japanese Navy
INA	Indian National Army
Inf	infantry
KNIL	Royal Netherlands East Indies Army
MPAJA	Malay People's Anti-Japanese Army
PC	Philippines Constabulary
POW	prisoner of war
Regt	regiment